

What is claimed is:

1. A method of block formatting a data storage medium in or to be added to an array of data storage media to a desired block format comprising:  
determining if a fast format indicator has been set for the data storage medium; and  
if the fast format indicator is set, then writing initially to any blocks of the data storage medium that will be read during initialization of the array of data storage medium.
2. The method as defined in claim 1, wherein if the fast format indicator is set and the step of writing initially to any blocks of the data storage medium that will be read during initialization of the array of data storage medium is performed, then subsequently obeying a write-before-read model wherein all writes are done in sizes that are greater than, or equal to a maximum read size.
3. The method as defined in claim 1, further comprising:  
after the writing step has been performed, changing the fast format indicator.
4. The method as defined in claim 1, further comprising  
determining a maximum read size for the storage system.
5. The method as defined in claim 1, wherein said array of data storage media comprises a RAID array of data storage media.
6. The method as defined in claim 1, wherein said data storage medium comprises a hard drive.
7. The method as defined in claim 1, wherein said desired block format is 520 bytes.

8. The method as defined in claim 1, wherein said current block format is 512 bytes.
9. An array of data storage media having automatic data storage medium block formatting capability, comprising:
  - a plurality of data storage media; and
  - a topology manager system for determining if a fast format indicator has been set for the data storage medium and if the fast format indicator is set, then performing initialization of said plurality of data storage media, said topology manager system writing initially to any blocks of the data storage media that will be read during initialization of the of the array of data storage medium
10. The array as defined in claim 9, wherein if the fast format indicator is set and the topology manager writes initially to any blocks of the data storage medium that will be read during initialization of the array of data storage medium is performed, then the topology manager subsequently obeying a write-before-read model wherein all writes are done in sizes that are greater than, or equal to a maximum read size
11. The array as defined in claim 9, wherein the topology manager, after the writing step has been performed, changes the fast format indicator.
12. The array as defined in claim 9, wherein said plurality of data storage media comprises a RAID array of data storage media
13. A program product for block formatting a data storage medium in or to be added to an array of data storage media to a desired block format, comprising machine-readable program code for causing, when executed, a machine to perform the following method:
  - determining if a fast format indicator has been set for the data storage medium; and

if the fast format indicator is set, then writing initially to any blocks of the data storage media that will be read during initialization of the array of data storage medium.

14. The program product as defined in claim 13, wherein if the fast format indicator is set and the step of writing initially to any blocks of the data storage medium that will be read during initialization of the array of data storage medium is performed, then subsequently obeying a write-before-read model wherein all writes are done in sizes that are greater than, or equal to a maximum read size

15. The program product as defined in claim 13, further comprising program code for:

after the writing step has been performed, changing the fast format indicator.

16. The program product defined in claim 13, further comprising program code for

determining a read size for the storage system.

17. A system for block formatting a data storage medium in or to be added to an array of data storage media to a desired block format comprising:

means for determining if a fast format indicator has been set for the data storage medium; and

if the fast format indicator is set, then writing initially to any blocks of the data storage medium that will be read during initialization of the array of data storage medium

18. An array of data storage media having automatic data storage medium block formatting capability, comprising:

a plurality of data storage media;

means for determining if a fast format indicator has been set for each of a plurality of the data storage media; and

means for, if the fast format indicator is set, writing initially to any blocks of the data storage medium that will be read during initialization of the array of data storage medium